

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 173060

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ORIGIN ITFE-05

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 DHA-02 ORM-01 AID-05 EA-10 H-02

PRS-01 SS-15 SP-02 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 SSO-00 /061 R

DRAFTED BY IATF:FGWISNER:SBA

APPROVED BY IATF:JVTAFT

----- 030981

R 230027Z JUL 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USMISSION GENEVA

CINCPACREP GUAM/TTPI MI

CG FT CHAFFEE ARK

CG CP PENDLETON CA

CG INDIANTOWN GAP PA

CG EGLIN AFB FLA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF US POLICY ON REPATRIATES

FOR SENIOR CIVIL COORDINATOR

1. YOU MAY WISH TO DRAW ON THE FOLLOWING POINTS IN YOUR DISCUSSIONS AND IN ANSWERING INQUIRIES.

2. BACKGROUND. THE UNITED STATES BELIEVES IN FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT FOR ALL PEOPLE. THUS, IT HAS BEEN CLEAR FROM THE BEGINNING THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD NOT STAND IN THE WAY OF ANY REFUGEE WHO INDICATED THAT HE WOULD PREFER TO RETURN TO HIS COUNTRY OF ORIGIN. WE TURNED TO THE TRADITIONAL INTERMEDIARY IN INSTANCES WHERE THE COUNTRIES INVOLVED DO NOT MAINTAIN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES.

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PAGE 02 STATE 173060

3. APRIL 26. THE UNHCR AGREED TO SEEK WAYS TO ASSIST VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION, BY INTERVIEWS WITH WOULD-BE REPATRIATES AND NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE AUTHORITIES IN VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA. A FIRST UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE WAS SUBSEQUENTLY SENT TO GUAM TO CONDUCT INTERVIEWS WITH THE EARLIEST WOULD-BE REPATRIATES.

4. MAY 3. THE FIRST REQUESTS FOR REPATRIATION CAME FROM A

GROUP OF VIETNAMESE AIR FORCE PERSONNEL. INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE REPRESENTATIVES ON GUAM WERE INSTRUCTED TO LODGE THEM SEPARATELY AND TO INFORM THEM OF THE U.S.' WILLINGNESS TO HELP TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND TO EXPLAIN THE ROLE OF THE UNHCR.

5. MAY 3. ALL REFUGEE STAGING SITES AND RECEPTION CENTERS WERE INSTRUCTED TO POST NOTICES AND TO RUN REGULAR ANNOUNCEMENTS IN THE CAMP NEWSPAPERS INFORMING THE REFUGEES OF THE OPTION OF REPATRIATION.

6. MAY 8. ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS WERE ADVISED BY CABLE OF U.S. POLICY REGARDING REPATRIATION AND INSTRUCTED TO TURN OVER ANY SUCH APPLICANTS TO THE UNHCR.

7. MAY 13. IN TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE, AMBASSADOR L. DEAN BROWN, THEN DIRECTOR OF THE INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE, SAID IN CONNECTION WITH U.S. POLICY, "IF THEY WANT TO GO BACK, THEN THROUGH THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, THEY WILL GO BACK."

8. MAY 22. IN TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION, CITIZENSHIP AND INTERNATIONAL LAW, AMBASSADOR BROWN REPORTED, "...WE HAVE MADE VERY CONSCIOUS EFFORTS, IN LIGHT OF THE DESIRES OF SOME OF THE MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE HERE, TO GET THE NEWS ACROSS TO EVERY VIETNAMESE, EITHER IN THE UNITED STATES OR AT GUAM AND WAKE, THAT THEY ARE NOT THERE UNDER COMPULSION, THAT THEY CAN GO BACK, THAT THERE IS A MECHANISM BY WHICH THEY CAN GO BACK. THEY CAN THINK IT OVER AGAIN."
UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 STATE 173060

9. MAY 29. THE FIRST UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE ARRIVED AT A CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES REFUGEE CENTER TO CONDUCT INTERVIEWS WITH WOULD-BE REPATRIATES TO ENSURE THEY HAD MADE THEIR DECISIONS VOLUNTARILY AND TO DISTRIBUTE THE QUESTIONNAIRE WHICH HAD BEEN WORKED OUT IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES AND WHICH IS REQUIRED IN SAIGON BEFORE A DECISION WILL BE MADE THERE.

10. JUNE 3. THE UNHCR NEW YORK REPRESENTATIVE ANNOUNCED THAT SOUTH VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES HAD REQUESTED ITS ASSISTANCE IN REPATRIATION BUT THAT A SOLUTION WOULD NOT EMERGE OVERNIGHT.

11. JUNE 20. APPROXIMATELY 80 OF THE MORE THAN 200 WOULD-BE REPATRIATES AT FORT CHAFFEE DEMONSTRATED AND THREATENED TO TURN VIOLENT IF THEY WERE NOT MOVED TO CAMP PENDLETON AS QUICKLY AS THEY HAD EXPECTED. (COUNTER-

DEMONSTRATIONS BY REFUGEES GRATEFUL FOR U.S. CARE FOLLOWED). THE MOVEMENT WAS TO BE PART OF A CONSOLIDATION PROCESS, FIRST AT PENDLETON, THEN ON GUAM, OF ALL WOULD-BE REPATRIATES ALREADY INTERVIEWED BY UNHCR REPRESENTATIVES.

12. JULY 8. IN RESPONSE TO AN APPEAL BY THE UNHCR FOR FUNDING, THE U.S. AGREED TO PROVIDE \$2 MILLION TO THE UNHCR TO PAY ITS COSTS AND THE COSTS OF THE TRAVEL OF REPATRIATES FROM THE U.S. REFUGEE SYSTEM TO VIETNAM IF AND WHEN THE AUTHORITIES THERE ACCEPTED THEIR RETURN.

13. THE U.S. ALSO INFORMED THE UNHCR THAT IT WAS PREPARED TO ASSIST IN SIMILAR WAYS IN THE REPATRIATION OF VIETNAMESE ALREADY LIVING IN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES WHO MIGHT DECIDE THAT THEY, TOO, WISHED TO RETURN.

14. JULY 4-21. APPLICANTS FROM THE U.S. AND CONTINENTAL REFUGEE CENTERS WERE MOVED TO GUAM.

15. JULY 19. THE UNHCR WAS ASKED URGENTLY TO RAISE WITH THE AUTHORITIES IN VIETNAM THE POSSIBILITY OF A

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PAGE 04 STATE 173060

MEETING BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF THE WOULD-BE REPATRIATES AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM SAIGON.

16. JULY 20. SLIGHTLY MORE THAN 2,000 VIETNAMESE AND CAMBODIANS HAVE APPLIED TO THE UNHCR FOR ASSISTANCE IN REPATRIATION. THE UNHCR HAS BEEN UNABLE TO GET AN ANSWER OF ANY KIND FROM PHNOM PENH AND HAS LEARNED FROM SAIGON THAT THE 600 QUESTIONNAIRES IT HAS ALREADY FORWARDED THERE ARE BEING SCREENED.

17. JULY 21. THE UNHCR REPORTED THAT IT WAS INSTRUCTING REPRESENTATIVES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA TO TRY TO ARRANGE THE REQUESTED MEETING BETWEEN REPATRIATES AND VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES.

18. JULY 22. USG CONCERN FOR THE CONTINUING WELFARE
OF THE WOULD-BE REPATRIATES AND OVER THE SLOW PROGRESS
TOWARD THEIR REPATRIATION WAS ONCE MORE CONVEYED TO THE
UNHCR. OUR AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS WAS ALSO
ASKED TO RAISE THE ISSUE WITH SECRETARY GENERAL
WALDHEIM. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEES, REPATRIATION, POLICIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE173060
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: FGWISNER:SBA
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750253-1141
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750729/aaaaaztu.tel
Line Count: 175
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN ITFE
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MartinML
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 JUN 2003 by ThomasVJ>; APPROVED <17 MAR 2004 by MartinML>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REVIEW OF US POLICY ON REPATRIATES FOR SENIOR CIVIL COORDINATOR
TAGS: SREF, US
To: USUN NEW YORK MULTIPLE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006